

The *Federal Flyer*

A Publication of the Legislative Affairs Office, Texas Department of Transportation

January 15, 1999

Vol. V, No. 1

AIP Reauthorization Gets Early Attention *House Committee Passes 6-month Extension Bill*

During its premier organizational meeting of the 106th Congress last week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee voted out H.R. 99, a bill to extend by six months the authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration's programs. The current authorization, which was enacted as part of last year's Omnibus Appropriations Act, provides program funding and authority through March 31, 1999 for all of the FAA's programs, including the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).

H.R. 99, when enacted, would extend that program authority through the end of the fiscal year, with an expiration date of September 30, 1999. This legislation is

expected to pass both house of Congress without controversy to give the Congress additional time to deal with a longer-term reauthorization bill.

Currently, the legislation is awaiting House floor action when the Congress reconvenes on January 19. Senate action will depend to a large degree on the schedule surrounding the Clinton

impeachment trial.

Since AIP funding is essential to the Texas general aviation and reliever airport system, the Texas Department of Transportation will be closely monitoring this important bill, together with the longer-term reauthorization legislation and the annual transportation appropriations efforts.



**AIP Reauthorization Is
Up, Up, and Away!!**



TxDOT Outlines Emphasis Areas for 1999

SIB, Aviation Top the List

As we begin our efforts in the First Session of the 106th Congress, the Legislative Affairs Office at TxDOT will focus its efforts on four main issues.

First, 1999 has been called "the year of aviation" by Chairman Shuster. TxDOT's federal team will help ensure that Texas gets the most out of the AIP reauthorization.

Second, Texas wants to see its State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) flourish. To accomplish that, we have to gain the ability to put part of our federal transportation funds into

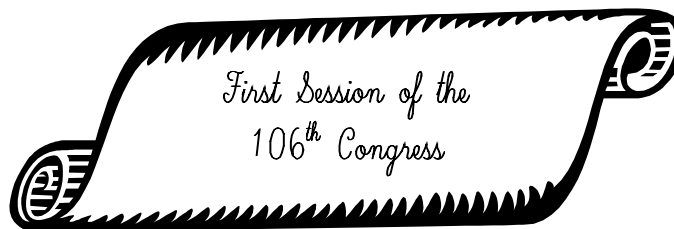
the SIB. We will work in 1999 to get that done.

Third, we will renew our efforts to bring as much of Texans' motor fuels tax payments back to Texas for use on the state's highways, transit, and highway safety programs. Through the annual appropriations process, we will work to ensure that Texas projects and programs get fair treatment.

And finally, but not least, we will continue to monitor the federal government's implementation of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) to guarantee that Texas does not lose

any of the funding and program flexibility gains we accomplished in that legislation. In particular, we will look to see that highway and transit funds are distributed to the states as provided in the law. In addition, we will work to make sure that Texas projects submitted for discretionary funding receive fair consideration.

If you have any question about our federal legislative efforts for 1999, please contact Mr. David Soileau, Federal Section Manager, at (512) 463-6081.



The *Federal Flyer* is a publication of the TxDOT Legislative Affairs Office. It is intended to provide up-to-date information on major legislative activities in the 105th Congress for the management of the Texas Department of Transportation, state leaders, and others interested in Texas transportation issues. This report will also feature key activities in the national transportation community. Sources include news services and staff reports.

Coby Chase, Director of Legislative Affairs, serves as publisher and can be reached at (512) 463-6086. The department's federal legislative analysts are Tonia Norman Ramirez (463-9957) and David Soileau (463-6081). Please contact any of the staff for information on federal transportation and legislative issues.

This publication will be filed with the State Publications Clearinghouse in the State Library in accordance with the Texas State Depository Law.